

REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

Claims 26 and 28 have been amended. Claims 41-46 have been cancelled. Claims 1-25 and 41-46 have been cancelled. Thus, claims 26-40 remain pending in the present application. No new matter has been added. In light of the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all presently pending claims are in condition for allowance.

II. THE 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) REJECTIONS SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN

Claims 26-28, 31, 32, 34, 36, and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being obvious over Ota et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,811,053) in view of Hiraiwa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,673,296).

Claim 26 has been amended to recite, “A method for manufacturing a surface decor for a trim part, the surface decor comprising a first region formed exclusively by a decor inlay and a second region formed by a cast skin, comprising: introducing the decor inlay into a space between upper and lower tools of a casting tool; clamping an edging of the decor inlay between the upper and lower tools so that the edging projects into a cavity formed between the upper and lower tools and corresponding to the second region of the surface decor, *a remaining portion of the decor inlay being accommodated outside of said cavity, the cavity being sealed at a location where the decor inlay is clamped between the upper and lower tools; and filling the cavity between the upper and lower tools with a curing material including polyurethane to form the cast skin enclosing the edging after the decor inlay has been clamped between the upper and lower tools.*”

The Examiner states that Ota discloses “filling the cavity with a curing material enclosing the edging.” (See 6/24/09 Office Action, p. 2). Applicant respectfully disagrees. Ota discloses that semi molten resin M is distributed over the surface of lower

die 60. Subsequently, “the upper die is further lowered until the upper and lower dies 60 and 70 are closed upon each other as illustrated in FIG. 8 with the result that the resin core member 20 is molded into the prescribed shape, and, at the same time, the surface skin member 30 is integrally attached to a part of the surface of the resin core member 20.” (See Ota, col. 7, ll. 5-14). It is evident from this statement that the semi molten resin M does not enclose the edging of surface skin member. Figure 8 of Ota further proves this contention. The resin core member 20 does not enclose skin member 30, but merely abuts it on one side. Furthermore, Ota fails to disclose that the décor inlay is clamped (also admitted by the Examiner). The Examiner states that such practice is well known in the art. Even if this were true, which Applicant does not admit, Ota explicitly states that the semi molten resin M is distributed over the surface of the lower die **before** the upper die, along with surface skin 30, is lowered. So, there would be no possibility for Ota to fill “*the cavity between the upper and lower tools with a curing material including polyurethane... after the decor inlay has been clamped between the upper and lower tools.*” Hiraiwa fails to cure this deficiency.

The Examiner correctly acknowledges that Ota fails to disclose or suggest that a remaining portion of the décor lies outside the cavity. (See 6/24/09 Office Action, p. 2). To cure this deficiency, the Examiner relies on Hiraiwa and refers to figure 4 of Hiraiwa. It seems that the Examiner is referring to the portion of the skin material that protrudes out of the apparatus. (See Hiraiwa, Fig. 4, Upper portion of figure). However, claim 1 clearly states that the décor inlay is in “a space between upper and lower tools of a casting tool.” In contrast, the protruding portion of the skin material in Hiraiwa protrudes out of the entire apparatus and is not disposed between confronted molding dies 10 and 20. Accordingly, Hiraiwa fails to disclose or suggest that “a remaining portion of the decor inlay being accommodated outside of said cavity” while also being disposed in “a space between upper and lower tools of a casting tool,” as recited in claim 26.

Applicant respectfully submits that Ota and Hiraiwa, taken alone or in any combination, fail to disclose or suggest “*a remaining portion of the decor inlay being accommodated outside of said cavity, the cavity being sealed at a location where the*

decor inlay is clamped between the upper and lower tools; and filling the cavity between the upper and lower tools with a curing material including polyurethane to form the cast skin enclosing the edging after the decor inlay has been clamped between the upper and lower tools,” as recited in claim 26 and that claim 26 is, therefore, allowable. Because claims 27-28, 31, 32, 34, 36, and 37 depend on and, therefore, contain all of the limitations of claim 26, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also allowable.

Claims 30, 33, 35, and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being obvious over Ota in view of Hiraiwa and further in view of Spengler (U.S. Patent No. 6,214,157). Claim 29 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being obvious over Ota in view of Hiraiwa and further in view of Loren (U.S. Patent No. 4,847,024).

Applicant respectfully submits that neither Spengler nor Loren cure the above mentioned deficiencies of Ota and Hiraiwa and that Ota, Hiraiwa, Spengler, and Loren, taken alone or in any combination, fail to disclose or suggest “*a remaining portion of the decor inlay being accommodated outside of said cavity, the cavity being sealed at a location where the decor inlay is clamped between the upper and lower tools; and filling the cavity between the upper and lower tools with a curing material including polyurethane to form the cast skin enclosing the edging after the decor inlay has been clamped between the upper and lower tools,”* as recited in claim 26. Because claims 29, 30, 33, 35, and 40 depend on and, therefore, contain all of the limitations of claim 26, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also allowable.

CONCLUSION

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: August 20, 2009

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